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SPECIAL REPORT

SAIONJI-HARADA MEMOIRS

SUPPLEMENT

"PRINCE SAIONJI AND THE ASSASSINATION OF CHANG TSO-LIN"

(7 Apr 1930)

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Master
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Classification of the Saionji-Harada Memoirs is changed to RESTRICTED, by authority of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, GHQ, FEC, by Angus V. Rutledge, Major, Field Artillery, 1 March, 1947. (see para 16 AR 380-5, dated 6 March, 1946.)

Angus V. Rutledge

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THE SAIONJI - HARADA MEMOIRS

PRINCE SAIONJI AND THE ASSASSINATION OF CHANG TSO-LIN

- Foreword -

Kumao Harada, private secretary to Prince Saionji, the last of the Genro, prepared this account of the assassination of Chang Tso-lin, and of Saionji's effort to bring the assassin to justice, as a separate but related portion of the SAIONJI - HARADA MEMOIRS. The account bares the part played by Japanese Army officers in the assassination, Premier Tanaka's lying report to the Emperor, and the opposition of Army and political party leaders to the view of Saionji that the responsible persons should be openly tried and sternly punished. It also contributes a new chapter to the blood-stained history of Manchuria by including the story of an earlier (1915) attempt by Japanese military and civilian officials to bring about the assassination of Chang Tso-lin.

Harada wrote two drafts of the manuscript, the first in two sections, the second in one. The second draft is an exact replica of the first and is the more legible of the two; this translation was made from the second draft. For some reason not yet determined, Harada crosed out, lightly in pencil, the portion of the second draft which covers the abortive plot of 1915. It seemed, however, to be desirable to include this portion in the translated document. The manuscript was obtained, together with the ramainder of the Saionji - Harada Memoirs, by Lieutenant Colonel Paul Rusch, Chief, Special Activities Branch, CIS, G-2, from a high official of the Imperial Household.

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Saionji - Harada Memoirs

7 April 1930

Prince Saionji and the Assassination of Chang Tso-lin

Translated by Mr. Mikio Asano

On the day that the news of the bombing of the train on which CHANG Tso-lin (the war-lord of Manchuria) was en route from Peking to his home in Mukden -- the so-called "Certain Serious Incident in Manchuria" -- appeared in the newspapers, Prince SAIONJI said to me: "I think that there is something fishy about this. This cannot be told to anyone; I think that the perpetrators (of this crime) may be members of the Japanese Army." The Prince was worried over the matter.

After a lapse of some time from the occurrence of this incident, Premier TANAKA, (Giichi) came to Prince SAIONJI clandestinely and intimated: "I fear that they are members of the Japanese Army who committed it."

Prince SAIONJI strongly advised Premier TANAKA as follows: "Should it perchance be revealed that it was committed by members of the Japanese Army, they should be firmly punished. The discipline within our Army must be maintained. The reputation of the Japanese Army, as well as the honor of the nation, would be maintained by their stern punishment. Even if, as a result of this, the (Japanese) public feeling toward China should be aggravated, this course should be taken, for only by this measure can the international integrity of Japan be maintained. Moreover, the past disrepute of the Japanese Army will be effaced by this action. Should it become known that the Japanese Army will punish army personnel who commit such crimes, in other words, should

* All parenthesis inserted by translator

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it become known that, although the Army had committed disreputable acts in China and Manchuria in the past, the general situation within Japan has now changed and the Army will now strictly punish any of its personnel who commit such crimes, the effect will be that China will come to bear goodwill toward Japan in the long run.

"Moreover, domestically the public will feel that Premier TANAKA is able to keep the Army under control through such drastic measures, because on the one hand he has been a career Army officer, and on the other hand because a powerful political party like the Seiyukai supports him. Consequently, the fact that a political party (Seiyukai) and its President, TANAKA, has firmly maintained discipline within the Army undoubtedly will make a very favorable impression upon the public. By all means take drastic action. Should it become evident, upon investigation, that members of the Japanese Army are the perpetrators of the crime, punish them instantly."

The coronation ceremony (of Emperor HIROHITO) was approaching, the popularity of Premier TANAKA was gradually increasing, and the Diet session was in the offing. Consequently, Premier TANAKA made a non-committal answer to this advice of Prince SAIONJI. TANAKA replied: "I'll do something about the matter as soon as the coronation ceremony is over." To this, Prince SAIONJI urged TANAKA: "Go and report this matter immediately to the Emperor."

At this time the opinion of practically every leading official of the Seiyukai in regard to this matter was that if it were true that members of the Japanese Army had committed the crime, the matter should be hushed up and kept dark.

(When TANAKA discussed this matter with his Cabinet), powerful members of the Cabinet advised the Premier: "By no means should you punish the perpetrator (of the crime). The punishment might reveal the fact that members of the Japanese Army had committed the crime -- the fact that members of the Emperor's Army had committed such a crime. Should this become known to foreign nations, it would be tantamount to soiling the Emperor's face with mud. How would the Emperor be able to face the ambassadors and ministers of foreign nations? At any rate Prince SAIONJI has mistaken notions about the handling of this matter." The movement for hushing up the crime and keeping it dark was conducted vigorously. Therefore Premier TANAKA was very reluctant to take any drastic step.

(Because Premier TANAKA would not report the case to the Emperor in spite of Prince SAIONJI's advice), the Prince pressed him repeatedly to go and report the matter to the Emperor. TANAKA was constrained to report it to the Emperor. He went to the Emperor and reported: "In regard to the CHANG Tso-lin bombing incident, I feel that the perpetrators of the crime might perchance be members of the Japanese Army. I am now having the case investigated by the War Minister (SHIRAKAWA, Yoshinori). When the investigation of this case is completed, the War Minister will make a detailed report to Your Majesty."

Thereafter the War Minister also went to the Emperor and reported the general nature of this case to His Majesty; he added that he would again make a report of the matter after a thorough investigation of it had been made. The Emperor told the War Minister: "You must endeavor to maintain discipline within the Army."

With the passage of time, the Army came secretly to regard the action of the perpetrator (of the crime) as having been motivated by the spirit of loyalty and patriotism to the nation; and an increasing number of Army officials began clandestinely to commend it (the assassination) as an admirable, brave act.

From the date of the occurrence of this incident, Prince SAIONJI reiterated whenever I met him: "Persons who cannot comprehend logical, rational reasoning are hopeless. Premier TANAKA at least ought to have more sense. Members of his Cabinet are claiming: 'Should the culprit be punished, and should the fact that he is a Japanese become known to other nations, as a result of this, Japan's reputation will suffer internationally and the Emperor will lose face.' Their way of thinking is diametrically opposed to mine.

"Should this (that Japanese Army personnel had commited the crime) be true, the culprits should be firmly punished according to military penal laws. By taking this course of action, the face of the Emperor can be saved and the international integrity of Japan be maintained. Should this sort of thing be hushed up and kept dark, the reputation of the Japanese Army will suffer; the nation will be disgraced in the eyes of other nations, and the august virtues of His Majesty the Emperor will be marred.

"The persons, who are endeavoring to hush up the matter, in wholly ignoring this clear and self-evident reasoning, are a hopeless lot. I, SAIONJI, can never permit this matter to be overlooked."

Two or three months elapsed; but the Government

took hardly any steps in regard to the matter. Sometime in November, the night before Prince SAIONJI was scheduled to return to his home in Okitsu from Tokyo, a letter came to him from Premier TANAKA stating: "I shall report (on the CHANG assassination incident) to the Emperor tomorrow."

The following day, I accompanied Prince SAIONJI to Okitsu. I had planned to return to Tokyo that very evening; (just before I left) Prince SAIONJI called me. He said: "Please wait awhile. There is something I want to tell you." I went to the Prince's room. He said: "According to Premier TANAKA's letter of last night, he must have reported upon the Manchurian (assassination) incident to the Emperor today. Therefore, when you return to Tokyo, go and see CHINDA, the Grand Chamberlain; don't tell him you came in behalf of SAIONJI. I want you to ask him -- as if you were interested for your own sake -- just how much of the data concerning the incident Premier TANAKA reported to the Emperor."

Late that evening I returned to Tokyo; I went to Count CHINDA's in Bancho, (Kojimachi-ku). I met the Grand Chamberlain and asked him about the main points (of Premier TANAKA's report to the Emperor). He said: "I was not in attendance (when Premier TANAKA was received in audience by the Emperor). However, he reported matters pertaining to diplomatic affairs in a written form. It seems that in regard to the Manchurian (assassination) incident, he made an oral report to His Majesty. I have no knowledge of just what he told the Emperor." I felt that the Grand Chamberlain was also greatly worried over this incident. Some time later I reported this to Prince SAIONJI at Okitsu.

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Prince Saionji and the Assassination of Chang Tso-Lin

When the coronation ceremony was over, and immediately before the opening of the Diet session, this problem again became a serious issue. Prince SAIONJI wanted it to be definitely settled before the opening of the Diet session. Nevertheless, the matter was not settled as he wished.

At that time, members of the (TANAKA) Cabinet were greatly enraged. They said: "It is outrageous that the Premier has consulted Prince SAIONJI on the matter and has reported the Manchurian (assassination) incident to the Emperor without conferring with us at all."

The Government at that time prohibited the press from reporting news on the CHANG Tso-lin (assassination) incident. For this reason, the Seiyukai Cabinet, which had been the active proponent of newspaper morality, was criticized by the general public. With due respect to Prince SAIONJI's advice Premier TANAKA had originally decided that the investigation of this Manchurian (assassination) incident should not be soft-pedaled for political reasons; he had planned to place the War Minister in charge of the investigation; and (after this preliminary investigation) to have the War Minister convene a conference of leading army officials to re-examine the case from the standpoint of the War Ministry, in order to decide whether the case should be handled through judicial processes.

The Army wanted to conduct the investigation as a mere routine administrative check-up and dispose of the case through administrative processes without handling it through judicial processes (court-martial); the Army's general intention was to hush up the case and keep it dark.

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Prince Saionji and the Assassination of Chang Tso-Lin

I frequently went to see the War Minister and asked him for information on the matter. Whenever I went to see the War Minister for reports on the progress of the investigation, he openly expressed his extreme dissatisfaction: "I feel extremely disgusted over the attitude of Premier TANAKA and the psychological reactions of the (Seiyukai) Cabinet in regard to this incident." For some years before this bombing (CHANG assassination) incident occurred, Communications Minister KUHARA, (Fusanosuke), the intimate friend of Premier TANAKA, had activated his henchmen for machinations in Manchuria; and Premier TANAKA had given his silent consent to these activities of KUHARA." The Army seems to be extremely enraged and disgusted (over the fact that, whereas Premier TANAKA had condoned the Manchurian machinations of his intimate friend KUHARA, he now appeared to be imputing all the responsibility of machinations in Manchuria solely to the Army).

In order to suppress the above atmosphere of dissatisfaction prevailing within the Army toward him, Premier TANAKA secretly summoned General UGAKI, (Kazushige) and requested him to appease the Army. I heard this personally from UGAKI himself when this occurred.

In the meantime, although the facts concerning the incident had become evident, the Army, under the pretext that the investigation was still going on, procrastinated in reporting the findings of the investigation to the Emperor. Moreover, the procrastination was further aided and abetted by the pressure for hushing up the matter exerted by Cabinet members. This caused the Emperor to demand urgency in carrying out the investigation.

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Premier TANAKA as well as his Cabinet members sought to prevent the collapse of the Cabinet over their responsibility in this incident. They tried to impute the responsibility to members of the Army directly implicated in the incident and thereby evade their own responsibility.

Some time thereafter, a conference of Division Commanders was convened (in Tokyo). On the appointed morning the Division Commanders went to the Imperial Palace in order to report on their commands and also to enjoy the honor of dining with His Majesty.

I had heard the previous evening that after the Division Commanders' dinner with the Emperor was over, (and they had left the Imperial Palace), the War Minister, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon was going to the Imperial Palace to report on the Manchurian (CHANG assassination) incident. I notified the Lord Privy Seal (MAKINO) about this matter. The Lord Privy Seal said: "About noon, I'll be at the Imperial Palace; therefore, if possible, please obtain beforehand from General UGAKI the content of what the War Minister is going to report to the Emperor." I, therefore, telephoned General UGAKI's home and asked for the General. He had already left his home to go to the Imperial Palace to dine with the Emperor. Thereupon, I immediately went to the Imperial Palace; I had Chamberlain HONDA summon General UGAKI out into the hall when (the meal was over and) coffee was being served. I asked UGAKI for information (on what the War Minister was going to report to the Emperor that afternoon). General UGAKI said: "It seems that before the Division Commanders were received in audience by the Emperor (this morning), the War Minister had been received in audience by the

Emperor and had finished reporting to His Majesty concerning the results of the investigation (on the CHANG assassination incident). His report, which was scheduled for the afternoon, was shifted to this morning." The War Minister reported all the facts concerning the incident; however, they were kept an absolute secret from the public.

Even after the Diet session was over, Premier TANAKA still hesitated over the matter of punishing the perpetrator (of the crime) and consequently could not report to the Emperor that the case was closed. The Cabinet had tried to get not only the Army but also the Foreign Office and the Kwantung Governor-General's office to investigate the case. However, the Foreign Office tried to escape from involvement in the case. Especially ARITA, (Hachiro), the Asia Bureau Chief of the Foreign Office, refused point-blank to have anything whatever to do with it. The Foreign Office would not permit itself to be embroiled in the case.

When I reported this to Prince SAIONJI, he said: "That is a very logical attitude (on the part of the Foreign Office). It is best for the Foreign Office not to be involved in the case."

During the Diet session, the Government seemed much harassed and embarrassed by questions from the opposition party (Minseito) in regard to this matter. Nevertheless, the Diet session terminated without too much trouble (for the Government).

Thereafter, the Premier, sandwiched between the Army and his Cabinet members, procrastinated in taking any definite action. Therefore he was again pressed

by the Emperor to report (on just what he was going to do about it).

Prince SAIONJI said: "To permit this case to be pigeon-holed by procrastination is undesirable not only from the standpoint of Japan's national integrity but also from the standpoint of maintaining discipline and morale in His Majesty's Army." He soliloquized in my presence: "As long as SAIONJI is alive, the Manchurian (CHANG assassination) incident won't be permitted to be pigeon-holed."

Finally, in the middle of May, the Premier made a report to the Emperor in regard to this case; he told the Emperor: "In regard to the Manchurian (CHANG assassination) incident, I ordered the War Ministry, Kwantung Governor-General's office, and the South Manchuria Railway, to make a thorough investigation of the matter. Fortunately it has become evident that no Japanese Army personnel are implicated in the crime. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the occurrence of the incident was due to the negligence of the Japanese Army in guarding the railway: the persons responsible for laxity of duty in this respect will be punished for their misdemeanor."

As a result of this, some time later, the Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army was placed on the reserve list; and the actual perpetrator (of the crime), a staff officer, (of the Kwantung Army, KAWAMOTO, Taisaku) was merely transferred to another post.

When Premier TANAKA had first reported this case to the Emperor, he had said: "It appears that the perpetrator (of this crime) is a member of the Japanese Army." To this,

the Emperor had said words to this effect: "By all means endeavor to maintain firmly the discipline of the Japanese Army."

With the passage of time, information from various sources indicated gradually and clearly that the perpetrators (of the crime) were members of the Japanese Army. In other words, it became evident that it was an incident which, by its very nature, required that the persons implicated in it should have been court-martialed. The Emperor consequently became worried over the fact that the perpetrator (of the crime) had been treated as having committed merely a misdemeanor, which was not the right way to maintain discipline in the Japanese Army. The Emperor summoned Premier TANAKA and asked him: "Isn't there a discrepancy between your last report (in which you said that the perpetrator of the crime was not Japanese Army personnel) and your first report (in which you said that the perpetrator might be a member of the Japanese Army)?" After speaking these words to the Premier, the Emperor left the room and (immediately) said to SUZUKI, the Grand Chamberlain: "What Premier TANAKA reports to me is entirely illogical; I don't care to listen to him again."

The Grand Chamberlain (SUZUKI), who had been but recently appointed to his post, was unfamiliar with court procedure; therefore, he immediately conveyed to TANAKA in toto these words of the Emperor. When Premier TANAKA heard this he was filled with sorrow and trepidation; tears flowed from his eyes. He instantly determined to have the Cabinet resign en bloc. Thus the TANAKA Cabinet collapsed.

Prince Saionji and the Assassination of Chang Tso-Lin

An incident wholly similar in nature to this Mukden (CHANG assassination) incident occurred in 1915 during the time of the OKUMA Cabinet. There occurred at that time the so-called "CHANG Tso-lin Assassination and Mukden Independence Movement."

Some time before this, YADA, the present Minister to Switzerland, had been in the Political Affairs Bureau (of the Foreign Office) and had been in charge of the negotiation conducted between China and Japan at that time. After this negotiation between the two countries had been concluded, he was sent to Manchuria in September of 1925 to succeed OCHIAI as acting Consul-General at Mukden.

Some time before that, CHANG Tso-lin was the Commander of the 20th Division ((of the Chinese Army). The Governor-General (of Manchuria) at that time was TUAN's younger brother. However, (by the time YADA went to Mukden) CHANG had expelled the TUAN brothers from Manchuria and had become the Governor-General himself. With the slogan, "Manchuria for the Manchurians," CHANG had come into power with the aid of Japan's Gunbatsu (military clique).

At this time, YUAN Shih-k'ai was at the height of his power in Peking and was on the verge of becoming the Emperor (of China). In the Japanese Government of that time, the present Premier TANAKA was the War Minister; the 2nd Section Chief of the General Staff Headquarters was General FUKUDA. The Political Affairs Bureau Chief of the Foreign Office was KOIKE, Chozo. The Naval Affairs Bureau Chief of the Navy Ministry was AKIYAMA, Masayuki.

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Utilizing the fact that there was an atmosphere of opposition in certain quarters of China against YUAN Shih-k'ai over his ambition to become the Emperor (of China), KUHARA, (Fusanosuke) secretly supplied funds to the present Kuomintang, then in southern China, and aided it in raising an army against YUAN Shih-k'ai. In North China the Okura-gumi provided funds for creating an independent state comprising Manchuria and Mongolia, with PU-YI, who was then in exile in Port Arthur, as its figurehead.

The General Staff Headquarters sent TSUCHII, Juzo, who then was a regimental commander, to Manchuria; KOISO, (Kuniaki) was appointed TSUCHII's staff officer. These two had their headquarters in the accessory territory of the South Manchuria Railway in Mukden. They collaborated with the South Manchuria Railway and the Governor-General's office of the Kwantung Leased Territory, whose chief then was General NAKAMURA, Kaku. Risking their lives, TSUCHII and KOISO gathered coolies and hoboes from various districts of China and organized an army.

On the other hand, the South Manchuria Railway persuaded PAPUCHAPU (war lord) of Mongolia, who had several thousand followers, to join hands with it and had him march on Mukden. And for the purpose of assassinating CHANG Tso-lin, a person in the reserve of the Japanese Army was provided with bombs.

When Prince KANIN, who had been sent to Russia as an Envoy of the Emperor for the purpose of returning a visit the Russian Emperor's younger brother had made to Japan, was going to pass through Mukden on his return trip from Russia, General NAKAMURA went as far as Antung-

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hsien to greet the Prince. The (aforementioned) YADA, the acting Consul-General at Mukden, went to Mukden station to pay his respects to Baron (& General) NAKAMURA. In his capacity as Governor-General (of Manchuria), CHANG Tso-lin went to Mukden station to pay his respects to Prince KANIN, who was going to pass through Mukden.

In returning (home from Mukden station) YADA happened to be riding in the (horse-drawn) carriage immediately following that of CHANG, which was at the head of his (CHANG's) procession. Just before he reached his home, a bomb was thrown at CHANG. Five or six of his attendants were instantly killed. CHANG Tso-lin barely managed to jump off his carriage; he grabbed the hat of one of his guards, placed it on his own head, jumped on the horse of the same guard; and escaped along a side street. In the meantime CHANG's procession itself went along its scheduled course. CHANG was able to save his life.

A second bomb was also thrown. YADA went to observe the site where the first bomb was thrown. It was a wretched and grim sight; a dud bomb was lying on the ground, so YADA picked it up and took it home with him. When he later showed it to General HONJO, the general said: "The explosive power (in this bomb) is a special powder of Japan."

The perpetrator of the first bombing died (at the site of the bombing). When his body was examined, it was discovered that he was a Japanese.

Some time after this occurred, the army of PAPUCHAPU marched toward Mukden. However, because Mukden had not been cast into chaos, as had been expected, the plot as originally planned could not be effectuated. Consequently,

a plot was again hatched to throw Mukden into chaos as originally planned. It was planned that (as soon as Mukden was thrown into chaos) Colonel TSUCHII, disguised as a Chinese, would command his army of Chinese coolies, seize the city of Mukden, and then negotiate an understanding with YADA, the Mukden acting Consul-General of Japan, to secure Japan's endorsement of their plan (for creating an independent Manchuria-Mongolia state). They (the Japanese army officers, TSUCHII and KOISO, organizing this plot) tried to secure YADA's consent to this plan of theirs; YADA categorically rejected their proposal.

The whole plan ended in failure. Although the army of PAPUCHAPU did (eventually) reach Mukden nothing materialized from it.

Details of this plot became known to the Chinese. As a result of this, the situation became unbearably embarrassing for General FUKUDA (the 2nd Section Chief of the General Staff Headquarters) and Vice-Admiral AKIYAMA (the Naval Affairs Bureau Chief of the Navy Ministry, who were implicated in this plot). KOIKE, Chief of the Political Affairs Bureau (of the Foreign Office, who also was implicated in this plot). resigned his post and entered a firm controlled by KUHARA, (Fusanosuke). Japan lost face as a result of this incident, and nothing materialized from it. Because of the fact that it has a close resemblance to the present Manchurian (CHANG assassination) incident, I have recorded it here for the sake of reference.